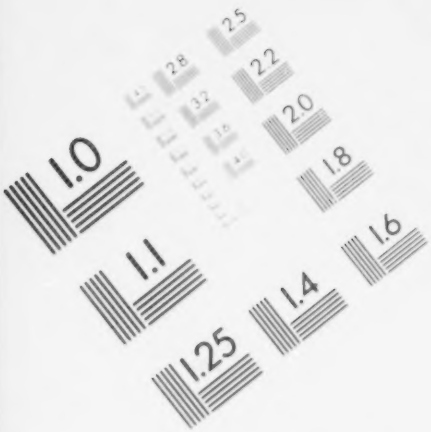

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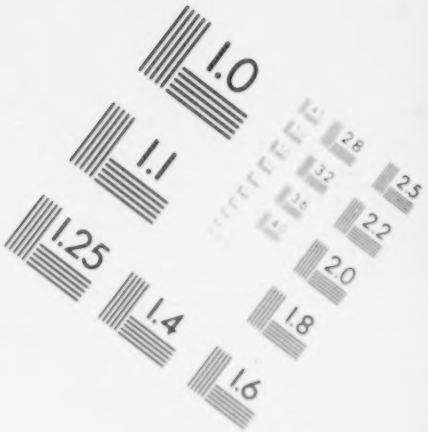

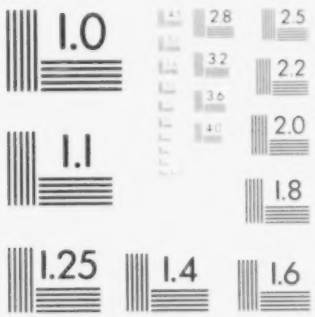

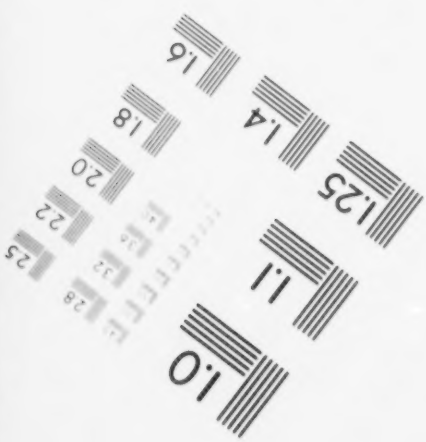

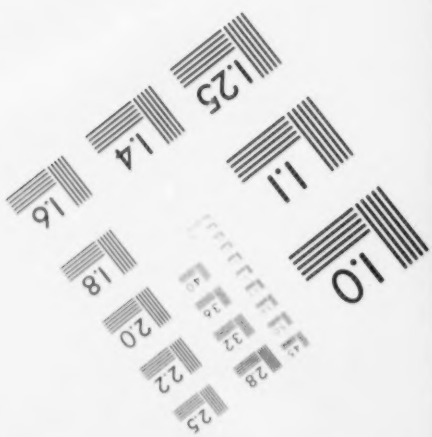

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ABSTRACT

In 1998, Idahoans gathered in a series of six Regional Futures Conferences to identify what they thought was probable during the next ten years, what was possible for libraries to do and be, and what a preferred future of Idaho libraries might be. Participants from the regional conferences then convened to refine and focus descriptions of the probable, possible, and preferred futures for Idaho libraries. Seven driving forces that will help shape the future of Idaho libraries are technology, population, economy, resource sharing, life-long learning, user needs, and funding sources. Eight concepts were identified as common ground elements for the preferred futures for Idaho libraries: (1) continuous access and service to anyone, anywhere, any time; (2) boundary-less, organic network with uniform interface; (3) cutting edge technology, gateway to the world; (4) fantastic, flexible, functional, fun facilities at the heart of the community; (5) common, stable, creative public/private funding; (6) politically organized and coordinated; (7) coordinated continual learning for staff and patrons; and (8) real people, human touch is maintained and enhanced. Strategies and activities for libraries were developed for each of these common ground elements. Using information from the conference, the State Library has developed initiatives to lead the Idaho library community to its preferred future. (MES)

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Idaho's Library Future

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IDAHO'S LIBRARY FUTURE

THE FUTURES PROCESS

"The library community must pursue what is possible within our resourcefulness, rather than decide what is feasible within our resources."
- Glen Hiemstra

In April 1998, Idahoans gathered in a series of six Regional Futures Conferences to identify what they thought was probable during the next 10 years, what was possible for libraries to do and be, and finally what a preferred future for Idaho libraries might be. In May, 60 people from the regional conferences convened to refine and focus descriptions of the probable, possible, and preferred futures for Idaho libraries. The following describes the outcome of that work.

DRIVING FORCES

Seven driving forces that will help shape the future of Idaho libraries over the next ten years are:

"Technological changes usually occur much faster than social ones."
- Glen Hiemstra

- TECHNOLOGY. There will be continual and increasingly rapid changes in technology. Patron expectations will increase as a result: they will want more services, more sophisticated services, and immediate response time. Staff will be learning continuously to apply new and appropriate technologies in their work and to guide patrons through increasing volumes of information. Library collections will become more diverse in format and services will be accessible in a variety of ways and places. Facilities will be designed to be flexible in order to accommodate changing technologies. Library budgets will support ongoing changes in technology and training to keep staff current.

"By 2001, an estimated 1 billion people will have Internet access."
- Glen Hiemstra

"Idaho will have the sixth fastest growth rate among the 50 states over the next 25 years."
- Glen Hiemstra

- POPULATION. Idaho's population will increase over the next ten years at a rate faster than the national average, primarily through in-migration. Our residents will become more diverse, particularly with a growing Hispanic population, and the average age in the state will increase as baby boomers age. As

"By 2025, 1 in 4 Idahoans will be 65 or older."
- Glen Hiemstra

"A spending wave is coming - most baby boomers will be in their peak spending years over the next 10 years."
- Glen Hiemstra

"Cooperate, collaborate, and look beyond your boundaries."
- Futures table discussion

"In 1900, the high school dropout rate was 90%. But nobody noticed because a higher level of education wasn't needed."
- Glen Hiemstra

"The current techno-economic revolution will continue to create rapid, major changes in our work and private lives."
- Glen Hiemstra

a result, there will be increasing and more diverse demands for library services, staffing requirements will change, and the pool of workers from which libraries hire will change.

- ECONOMY. The Idaho and world economies will affect libraries. Many economists believe that the economy will continue to grow and diversify as the world economy develops. If this occurs, libraries may benefit from public revenue surpluses. If the economy falls, library use may well increase as it has historically in poor economic times. The library community must be prepared to provide services and to demonstrate their value in either scenario.

- RESOURCE SHARING. Resource sharing will become essential and universal, not only among libraries but among other institutions and organizations that provide information. Technology will continue to make sharing of many types of resources easier. The demand for more services and more cost-effective services will eventually break down the barriers of different funding sources and local control issues.

- LIFE-LONG LEARNING. There will be a continual need for higher levels of education, re-education, and life-long learning. Formal, informal, alternative, and distance education will increase demands on librarians, library collections and services, and information access and delivery methods.

- USER NEEDS. User needs and expectations will increase and become more sophisticated. Technological advances will continue to create demands for immediate access to information. The rapid rate of change in society will create demands for current information for daily living, effectiveness at work, and life-long learning. Literacy skills, critical thinking skills, and the ability to locate and evaluate information will increase in importance. To balance the ubiquitous presence of machines and constant change, many users will look to the library for the human touch, social interaction, personal development, and temporary relief from the rat race.

"The world is full of choices. We must increase our ability to see them."
- Glen Hiemstra

- FUNDING SOURCES. Most Idaho libraries will continue to be publicly funded, but with an increase in public/private partnerships for funding specific programs. To support the changes and higher demands described above, funding for libraries will have to be strengthened and diversified.

OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

During the Futures Conference, a number of small groups each developed a "preferred future." Eight concepts were identified as common ground among those preferred futures:

"To be bold, we should know no more than 15% of how we will create our preferred future. Our neighbors will think we're crazy for trying."
- Glen Hiemstra

- Continuous access and service to anyone, anywhere, anytime
- Boundary-less, organic network with uniform interface
- Cutting edge technology, gateway to the world
- Fantastic, flexible, functional, fun facilities at heart of the community
- Common, stable, creative public/private funding
- Politically organized and coordinated
- Coordinated continual learning for staff and patrons
- Real people, human touch is maintained and enhanced

These common ground elements are the foundation of our preferred future for Idaho libraries by 2008:

"Step out of the box, off the paper, into the fire. Think in new ways."
- Futures table discussion

Imagine Idaho covered by a web of fantastic libraries equally accessible by all residents. Some are magnificent public buildings that are the hubs of their respective communities, with information in formats ranging from picture books to virtual reality, quiet study and tutoring areas, public meeting spaces both inside and out, friendly and professionally trained staff, and electronic connections to the world beyond. Others are the heart of schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, and other public service centers.

Look more closely at the library hubs and see park-like grounds, an in-house café that welcomes readers and informal gatherings, and extensive cultural and historical displays. Adults and children

come to these grand public buildings as students, business people, informal learners, hobbyists, community volunteers, and interested individuals to interact with both human and electronic information experts to learn about, explore, and enjoy the world around and beyond them.

"The library's governance and organizational structure must foster rapid change."
- Futures table discussion

Completing the web are branch libraries with varying specialties, information kiosks, and reference centers located throughout each county and linked electronically to each other and to the hubs. This web of libraries is the interface to a boundary-less, organic network of information and serves all types of library users. No matter where information is held around the world, library users are able to find it, access it and use it. And they do this at anytime, day or night, either by coming to the library or by accessing the library from wherever they are.

"Librarians are community leaders and marketing geniuses."
- Futures table discussion

But the library is more than high tech; it is also high touch. While new library services are based on the newest, cutting edge technology, they are provided by well-trained, friendly library staff. Through user education, staff members keep their communities informed about the constantly changing services the library has to offer. And they help users become critical consumers of the wide variety of information services available.

"The library is indispensable to the community."
- Futures table discussion

Because of the importance of information and education, the library is a vital partner in every "community" whether that community be a town, a school, a college or university, or a business or hospital. Librarians are strong advocates for the services they provide which brings solid political support for them in every community. Community members also recognize the importance of these services, so all libraries are strongly supported through a common and stable source of private and public funding.

A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Using the information from the Futures Conference, the State Library has developed a series of strategies, initiatives, and activities to lead the Idaho library community to its preferred

future. The strategies will be used as long as they are effective. The initiatives and activities will likely change from year to year.

"The future is not something that just happens to you. The future is something you do."
- Glen Hiemstra

The State Library invites ALL members of the library community - individuals, local libraries, consortia, and associations - to work with us in implementing these strategies and to develop regional and local initiatives and activities that will make strides toward our preferred future.

"Planning isn't about the future. It's folding the future back on the present in order to make better decisions today."
- Glen Hiemstra

The State Library, primarily through its Library Development Division, will continue to fulfill the following roles in support of our preferred future:

- Coordinate statewide planning and assess progress
- Facilitate local and regional planning
- Provide and/or coordinate statewide programs including consulting, continuing library education, reading, networking, and advocacy
- Administer grant programs

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR LIBRARIES

In the last session of the statewide Futures Conference, small groups discussed ways that Idaho libraries could work toward our Preferred Future. The following strategies and activities were drawn from the small group discussions and placed with the most relevant common ground element.

- CONTINUOUS ACCESS & SERVICE TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

  Strategy: Develop universal access to library services for all Idahoans.

  Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
  - Establish library districts statewide
  - Develop means for 24 hour / 7 day access to library resources
  - Develop more outlets and access points, both physical and electronic
  - Develop better and consistent school library services

- BOUNDARY-LESS, ORGANIC NETWORK WITH UNIFORM INTERFACE

  Strategy: Make sharing of resources universal among Idaho libraries.

  Strategy: Build regional library consortia / networks and link them together so all libraries are connected electronically.

  Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
  - Continue to expand LiLI
  - Continue to expand and develop consortia of all types of libraries
  - Look for and create opportunities for cooperation
  - Explore models of networking
  - Share automation consultants among libraries

- CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY, GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

  Strategy: Develop libraries as leaders in the application of appropriate technology to information access.

  Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
  - Promote planning for technology
  - Establish formal consortia statewide
  - Internet in every library
  - Public and staff computers in every library
  - Look for funding opportunities for technology
  - Provide ongoing training for staff and patrons

- FANTASTIC, FLEXIBLE, FUNCTIONAL, FUN FACILITIES AT HEART OF COMMUNITY

  Strategy: Develop a vision of fantastic facilities as part of our preferred future.

  Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
  - Do a needs assessment
  - Upgrade library facility standards for all types of libraries
  - Share information from libraries' successes
  - Create models for fantastic facilities - workshops, video, vision sessions

- COMMON, STABLE, CREATIVE PUBLIC/ PRIVATE FUNDING THROUGH AGGRESSIVE MARKETING

Strategy: Establish stable and broad-based funding for library services.

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:

- Provide training in identifying / developing funding sources and strategies
- Create a statewide library foundation
- Create a State Friends of the Library
- Pursue Gates and other grants
- Identify non-property tax funding sources
- Create vehicle for attaining and administering private funds on continuing basis
  - Action plan
  - Keep the doors open
  - Create more friends, partnerships
- Create stable funding
- Create a library funding development team

- POLITICALLY ORGANIZED AND COORDINATED

Strategy: Develop a coordinated marketing / advocacy approach to support our preferred future.

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:

- Aggressively market our preferred future
- Hire a lobbyist (ILA)
- Heighten profile of libraries within communities, and in political arena (city councils, county commissions, state legislature, etc)
- Use this futures process at home with trustees and governing officials
- Provide marketing training - skills and techniques
- Develop an advocacy campaign for school administrators and boards
- Develop partnerships with public and private entities at the state, regional, and local levels that support our preferred future

Strategy: Increase interaction and communication among all types of libraries at the state, regional, and local levels.

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:

- Futures conference participants discussion on LibIdaho
- Futures conference participants meet again

- More interaction among library boards
- Create incentives for collaboration, partnerships, cooperative agreements, and pooling resources among different types of libraries
- Design activities to increase communications, formalize multitype meetings
- Recognize creativity, risk-taking, and progress in the library community

- COORDINATED CONTINUAL LEARNING FOR STAFF & PATRONS

Strategy: Develop a highly professional Idaho library community.

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
- Implement statewide, regional, and consortia continuing library education programs to support our preferred future
- All libraries establish continual training, assessment, planning cycles

Strategy: Develop orientation and training programs for patrons in a variety of formats.

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
- None

- REAL PEOPLE, HUMAN TOUCH IS MAINTAINED & ENHANCED

An overarching premise, integrated in to all strategies

Activities identified at the Futures Conference:
- None